



ASCP Board of Certification: A Guiding Light in Laboratory Medicine for 90 Years

Since its founding as the American Registry of Medical Technicians in 1928, the ASCP Board of Certification (BOC) has evolved to become the gold standard in global certification for laboratory professionals. Today, it has certified more than 525,000 individuals around the world.

“The ASCP BOC legitimized the profession,” says Elizabeth Wheeler, MT(ASCP), who was certified by the BOC 49 years ago.

In the early part of the 20th century, there were no standards for measuring or qualifications for identifying the competency of laboratory technicians. Since the inception of the American Registry of Medical Technicians, many changes have taken place in laboratory medicine and the BOC.

From its early days, the BOC portfolio of credentials grew to include qualifications, in addition to certifications, to recognize an individual's skill in specific technical areas. In 2004, the Certification Maintenance Program (CMP) was developed to uphold the competence of laboratory professionals by requiring participation in continuing education to maintain certification. In 2006, the BOC introduced international certification. A year later, the organization was accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). In 2009, the BOC, then the ASCP Board of Registry (BOR), merged with the National Credentialing Agency for Laboratory Personnel (NCA) to form the present-day ASCP BOC.

This evolution has developed a legacy of excellence that unites laboratory professionals around the world. To this day, a group of 25 retired medical laboratory professionals gather monthly for breakfast at a diner in suburban Chicago. In addition to camaradery, what they share in common is their certification from ASCP.

“We are a community of professionals,” says Alan Hoffstadter, MT(ASCP)SSB, who recently celebrated his 50th year of BOC certification as a medical technologist. “We (who meet monthly) are all medical laboratory professionals who became trained and certified under the auspices of the ASCP BOC, an organization that looks to train individuals to the highest levels of professionalism.”

While the BOC honors its esteemed history, it also recognizes that it needs to evolve to meet future needs of the profession. “Being in the educational realm, I focus on what our new practitioners need to know,” says Michelle Brown, PhD, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}SBB^{CM}, who was certified by the BOC as a medical technologist in 1998. “We need to teach them the skills and tasks, but we also need to move from task-oriented to team-oriented, and that is a theme I use when I teach.”

Dr. Brown is director of the master's degree program in Healthcare Simulation at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She is a volunteer on the ASCP BOC Blood Banking Examination Committee. With the efforts of volunteers like Dr. Brown and many other certificants, the ASCP BOC continues to lead the way in providing a qualified medical laboratory workforce in the 21st century.

To learn more about the ASCP BOC, visit www.ascp.org/BOC